



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

### **TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE March 7, 2012**

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### **House Bill 5244 - AN ACT CONCERNING COLLABORATIVE FUNDING AGREEMENTS AND THE STEM CELL RESEARCH PROGRAM.**

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The Department of Public Health provides the following information with regard to House Bill 5244. The Department would like to thank the Public Health Committee for raising the Department's bill.

The purpose of this bill is to authorize the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Public Health to enter into agreements with other jurisdictions that fund stem cell research, including other states and countries, in order to encourage research collaborations among stem cell scientists. Legislative authorization to enter into this type of interstate compact is needed for the Commissioner to sign such an agreement.

By way of background, California's stem cell entity, the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) has approached Connecticut to sign a Memorandum of Understanding that would encourage both states to explore ways that the funding opportunities provided by each state could be coordinated to provide an even greater impact on the pace of progress in the stem cell research field.

California, which is authorized to expend 3 billion dollars for stem cell research over ten years, has entered into such agreements with eighteen other research funding entities including states such as New York and Maryland; organizations such as the JDRF and National Institutes of Health; and countries, including Canada, Germany, France, UK, Scotland, Spain, Japan, China, India, and Australia.

The Commissioner of the Department of Public Health is the Chair of the Stem Cell Research Advisory Committee, which directs the Commissioner in making grants-in-aid of almost \$10 million dollars annually to stem cell researchers in Connecticut from the Stem Cell Research Fund. Under a collaborative funding agreement, Connecticut would continue to fund the research conducted within the state and the research must comply with the Connecticut's legal and ethical requirements.

This type of agreement optimizes the use of resources, avoids duplicative research and encourages scientists to work with innovative colleagues around the world.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

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